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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR JANUARY 20, 2006

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for January 20, 2006. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): Owners of chicken farms in the Cukurova region have been suffering serious economic losses and most of them reportedly are not able to pay the debts incurred for chicken feed. Reportedly, thousands of chickens may starve to death at farms since the owners are not able to feed them anymore.

HURRIYET / SABAH: Four of the 36 children, who have been under hospital treatment because doctors have suspected their cases as bird flu, have recently been kidnapped by their families. Doctors expressed that they had no idea why the parents took away their children, and the treatment of the children has not been completed yet.

HURRIYET: Three provinces have been added to the list of places where there are patients suspected as having bird flu. These provinces are Mardin, Tunceli, and Aydin.

HURRIYET / ZAMAN: The third court hearing litigating Van Centennial University Rector Yucel Askin was held yesterday in Van. Undersecretary of Treasury attended the court hearing as an intervening attorney. The court heard statements of staff working at the hospital units for which medical devices were purchased as a result of a tender opened by the university. The court was then adjourned to February 23. Meanwhile, two Turkish-origin deputies of the German parliament have extended support to Askin through a written press announcement.

EVRENSEL / OZGUR GUNDEM: People in Semdinli reacted to the court releasing Sergeant Tanju Cavus as he continued to stand trial on charges of killing Ali Yilmaz when Cavus opened fire at a demonstrating crowd after the November 9 Semdinli incident. Tradesmen in the district did not open their businesses today as a sign of protest against the court decision. Esat Canan, Hakkari deputy from CHP (Republican People's Party), recalled the remarks of PM Erdogan who had said that courts could not use Semdinli citizens as witnesses since they might be under threat by the PKK, asked whether the words of PM Erdogan had proved themselves true in the course of that proceeding. Semdinli Mayor Hursit Tekin added that this court case would set an example to other military officers and encourage them (to kill people).

EVRENSEL: The daily reported claims circulating about a radar base established in the Amanos Mountains in Hatay at an altitude of 1770 meters. According to the claims of people concerned about the presence of a radar base in Hatay and the possibility that the U.S. could be using it to monitor the Middle East, American officers from Incirlik Airbase are paying visits at times to the site.

SABAH / EVRENSEL / OZGUR GUNDEM / ZAMAN: Diyarbakir Prosecutor's Office started a probe against Ahmet Turk, co-chairperson of DTP (Democratic Society Party), because of the press announcement (see press summary 01/19) of DTP Co-chairpersons and 56 mayors of the southeastern region in Turkey to make a call to the government not to aggravate tensions by confining the terrorist leader Abdullah Ocalan to a cell in his solitary prison in Imrali Island for 20 days.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Terrorist leader Abdullah Ocalan reportedly met with his attorneys and told them that his room was emptied, his books and his radio were taken away for 20 days. Ocalan reportedly claimed that such conditions were meant to develop suicidal tendencies in him. Ocalan said that he would not commit suicide but should he die, the state would be held accountable.

ZAMAN / SABAH: Three soldiers died and 13 of them were wounded when a military car had an accident on a road between Kahramanmaraş and Gaziantep.

ZAMAN / OZGUR GUNDEM: A journalist from Gun TV was allegedly attacked by a village agha and his men in a village in Diyarbakir's Bismil district (on an unspecified date) during an activity carried out by IP (Labor Party) to protest the agha, who attempted to till land that belonged to the Treasury. Gun TV news director demanded that the action be brought against the

assailants.

EVRENSEL: Following the decision of the Adana Cigarette Factory workers not to leave their workplaces until the government withdrew its decision to close down the factory, the workers in Malatya Cigarette Factory also started a similar strike in their factory.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): The volume of transactions in the Free Trade Zone of Gaziantep reportedly has decreased by 16 percent last year compared to the figures of 2004.

12. HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): The businessmen of Hatay paid a visit to Ahmet Kayhan, the new governor of Hatay, and provided information to the governor on the current problems awaiting solution in the province. BIRSIAD (United Businessmen and Industrialists Association) Chairperson Mehmet Narin said that the most pressing problem for Hatay was the airport, whose construction has been left incomplete for years. Narin also noted that a joint effort to build a dam on the Asi River with Syria should be a top priority on the list of issues to be addressed for the province.

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